

## Winter Water Tips

There are several measures that can be taken to prevent winter water disasters.

- It is a good idea to locate and mark your water service main-line valve and check it for proper operation. This valve controls water flowing into your home and is usually found near where the water line that comes into your house. Marking the valve will allow you to quickly turn off the water if a pipe should burst or you have other water problems.
- To make sure that your valve shuts off and on when you want it to, it is a good idea to work the valve occasionally, which means to turn the valve all the way off and all the way back on two to three times. We recommend doing this procedure twice a year, at the change for daylight savings time, at the same time you change out batteries for other devices.
- Make sure the water line to outside faucets is turned off and the line is drained. (It is a good idea to mark this line, as well). Drain each outdoor spigot after turning off the valve to prevent any remaining water from freezing and bursting the pipes. Some spigots have anti-siphon devices that must be opened to properly drain the line.
- Eliminate drafts. Check around the home for areas where water supply lines are located in unheated areas and take measures to prevent the flow of cold air in these areas. Look under the house, in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated. A hot water supply line can freeze just as a cold water supply line can freeze if water is not running through the pipe, and the water temperature becomes cold enough. Insulation supplies are available at your local home improvement or hardware store.
- If your water pipes do freeze, never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch. Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water.
- If you will be away from your home, keep the thermostat at a reasonable temperature to make sure all areas with water pipes are kept above freezing.
- Insulate pipes in unheated spaces. Hardware or building supply stores carry insulation designed to keep pipes in these areas from freezing.

### **What if I lose the heat source in my home?**

If you are staying in your home, or will be monitoring your home frequently, allow a faucet to drip cold water slowly. At a minimum, the dripping faucet should be the one that is the greatest

distance from your main water cutoff valve. Also, consider allowing a slow drip in areas that are least protected from the cold, such as basements, crawl spaces, attics, the garage.

### **What do I do if my water meter freezes?**

If you suspect you have a frozen water meter, call us for help. Do not attempt to thaw the water meter yourself as this can result in extensive damage. Our service crews are available 24 hours a day and will respond as soon as possible to your request. To contact DPW during normal business hours, call 703-435-6860. After normal business hours, contact Herndon Police Department at 703-435-6846 and they will contact staff to assist.